



Revival and Reformation Lesson 11 3Q 2013

Reformation: Thinking New Thoughts

Before we start the lesson I wanted to give a report on our trip to Singapore and Australia:

We had a wonderful time in both places – so many people shared with us how their lives have been changed because of this message about God.

Special thanks to Kok Tho Yip, his wife Roxanna and Carolyn Lim who coordinated the events in Singapore.

Special thanks to Simon Harrison who coordinated events in Australia and also did the artwork of the brain for the book and my presentations.

And Simon's wife, Wendy, sent a few gifts back for members of the class. Those who have arrived on time today are getting a special blessing from Wendy in Australia.

Your prayers were answered in our trip to Australia. I just wished each of you could have been there to see the smiles, joy, happiness, enthusiasm of those who are part of this movement to tell the world about God's character of love!

Please Pray for our upcoming Events:

September 6: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The National Boomers Conference in Allen, Texas (just outside of Dallas). Sponsored by the Texas Baptist Convention.

September 11-14: Dr. Jennings and nine others (Laurie and Peter Cooper, Tim and Brittany Ryder, Christie Jennings, Tamara Slocum, Stephanie Land, Dean and Zoe Scott) will be at the World Convention of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Dr. Jennings will do a 3 hour seminar on The God Shaped Brain, a 1 hour lecture on The Aging Brain, and we will have a booth and be giving away our materials. There will be over 7000 Christian counselors and pastors in attendance.

October 1: Come and Reason Ministries is partnering with J103's Pastor's Breakfast here in Chattanooga. They expect 400-500 pastors from our area to attend. You will hear ads for Come and Reason on J103 and also we will be there with a booth and give away our materials to these pastors.

October 15: Come and Reason Ministries is partnering with Men's Ministries Network and J103 for Mobilize Chattanooga...One man at a time, an evening with Ben Carson.

Also, our new Bible Study guide The Cosmic Conflict over God's Character is done – the digital version is already available on our website for download. The hard copy versions are being printed.



God is blessing this ministry and we are seeing such tremendous successes in opening minds, freeing people from living in the bondage of oppressive god concepts. Keep praying and keep sharing!

SABBATH

Read memory text: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1,2 NKJV)

Thoughts? What does “raised with Christ” refer to? What is the connection between being raised with Christ and where our minds focus? Can our minds focus and be set on heavenly things if we have not been raised with Christ?

What is the concern if, after we have been raised with Christ, we allow our minds to move away from heavenly things?

Read first paragraph, “Isaac Watts is credited...” thoughts?

Isn't it true? Our mind, our character, is really what makes the measure of a man.

Read second paragraph, “Isaac Watts was right...” thoughts?

What do you think it means to bring our thoughts into harmony with Christ's?

If we don't keep our thoughts in harmony with Christ's, but we still claim to be Christian what might our thoughts trend upon?

Will we be concerned with self?

- Certainly there would be the classic self preoccupations of worrying about what others think of us, worrying about the future, worrying about things we have no control over, with plotting, planning, calculating constantly how to get our own way.
- But, what about these thoughts, do you think these are thoughts that are in harmony with Christ's, or a subtle form of self-focus?
 - “I hope there isn't some sin I have committed that will keep me out of heaven.”
 - “Will God be mad if I eat this or watch that?”
 - “I can't help this person on Sabbath because I would break the commandment and sin.”
 - “I can't be friends with homosexuals because they are sinners and I am going to keep myself pure and follow Bible standards.”

If are thoughts are brought into harmony with Christ's do we live in fear of sinning? Do we live in fear of doing something wrong? Do we live in fear of God punishing us if we disobey?

Or if our thoughts are in harmony with Christ's might our thoughts be less self-focused and more like this:



- “Awesome are you ways oh God, amazing are your designs. I am so overwhelmed with your goodness, and humbled by your love.”
- “How can I share your beauty and love with others?”
- “What can I do to help relieve someone else’s burdens?”
- “Thank you God for the blessings you have provided!”
- “God thank you for the opportunity to help this person on your Sabbath day.”

thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our thoughts will ultimately dictate our...” thoughts?

There is much truth in this paragraph, our thoughts do influence us and our behavior influences our thoughts.

But to me, it is even more than this – we are not only influenced by our thoughts, but by our feelings, attachments, beliefs, imagination, and relationships. And in my experience it is the feelings which are the most troublesome and confuse the thoughts. The Bible supports this in James 1.

All of our experiences are processed (or not) through our thoughts. If we are going to make changes we generally need to think about it. Thus what we think, how we think, the methods we utilize in thinking become critical.

Do you ever analyze your thoughts? What tools do you use to determine if your thoughts are healthy? How can you tell if what you believe is reliable? My first book, *Could It Be This Simple?*, which we have here for anyone to take with them at no cost, was written to help people put their minds in balance, learn to think well. But, in addition to understanding our minds there are other tools to use when are minds are in balance.

I highly recommend the Integrative-Evidenced Based Approach:

- Examine what you believe in light of Scripture
- Test what you believe against the laws of nature
- Use your experience to test cause and effect
- Ask is my belief supported by all three threads or is something inconsistent?
- Pray to God for wisdom, insight, understanding – then study all three threads
- Discuss and study with others

Read third paragraph, “As we behold...” thoughts?

Do you believe this to be true? It is. So what happens if we believe distorted ideas about God?



Paul tells us in Romans chapter one that our minds become darkened, depraved and futile when we accept lies about God.

Why? What actually happens?

When we accept God concepts that incite fear we damage ourselves, activate fear circuits, incite false guilt, ultimately disrupt brain networks, interfere with ability to resolve emotional stress. This results in greater inflammation in the body, which reacts upon the brain causing destructive brain changes. Further, it results in loss of ability to discriminate and think healthfully. We become more self-referenced and begin creating theologies with protecting self at the center, like:

- Covered by the robe of righteousness means we are being hidden from God by Jesus
- Covered by the blood means that Jesus covers our defects so God can't see them
- We have the blood of Jesus applied to our record in heaven so the heavenly Judge can't use it against us
- We create the lie that Jesus died to propitiate and appease His Father's wrath.

Notice the focus of all these theories – it is self-protection and what they all assert is that we need protection from God.

But the truth is much different – the truth is that God is always on our side, and has been working through Christ to heal and restore. The metaphors, rightly understood, mean something quite different.

This is from a book called Christ's Object Lessons. Object Lessons are parables or metaphors which teach a greater reality. We want the greater reality. I agree completely with this perspective on being covered by the robe – notice how it is described here:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul... {COL 311.3}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.** {COL 311.4}

What does this author suggest the covering with Christ's righteousness means? Covering something up so God can't see or an actual, real, literal, internal change in the heart and mind of the believer? So, why if we are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness is it that the Father doesn't see our sinfulness? Because we have been healed, transformed, and sin has been removed from our hearts!

Which do you like better?



When we worship a distorted god we get more fearful and more self focused with distorted theologies. But when we worship a God of love brain science documents that we reduce inflammatory cascades, experience growth in circuits that correspond to love, empathy, and self-governance, and improve memory. We are literally transformed to be live lives that love others!

The last paragraph states, “Reformation is all about looking to Jesus.” Looking to Jesus for what? For what should we look to Jesus?

- Love
- Truth
- Healing
- Wisdom
- Comfort
- Assistance
- Deliverance
- What else?

Can we look to Jesus in ways that are not helpful, even harmful? How?

- Did they look to Jesus to use power to throw off Rome and dominate their enemies?
- March 5, 2006 Louis Farrakhan: “The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.”
- Do people look to Jesus for health and wealth? Can this be a means of misrepresenting God and injuring others? How?
- What about when pastors tell people with depression to look to Jesus and pray more and they won’t need medication?

What happens if we look to Jesus for our purposes, our wishes, and the fulfillment of human carnal desires? Examples?

- Would prayers of vengeance be Godly? But we see David praying this way in Scripture? So isn’t it Godly if it is in Scripture?
- What about praying for the fleshpots of Egypt, or a king?
- Do we ever pray for things that go against God’s will?
- What is the danger?
- If our hearts are determined to have it, and we are going to rebel completely against God without it, He might let us have our request – Why? Because He doesn’t want to lose contact with us and He would rather us get hurt by our own stubbornness while still connected to Him, so He can pick us up and heal us, then for us to permanently close the heart to Him.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Here is one simple...” thoughts?



Does it matter what we bring into our minds?

- Babies under 1 watch approximately 1 hour or more of TV per day
- 7 studies have now confirmed that babies who watch TV, any TV include things like Baby Einstein, have delayed language development
- There are no studies that show TV watching of educational material to under 2 y/o has any benefit
- Children get greater than 6 hours per day of electronic media - TV, music, video games, computers, texts, tweets, cell phones etc.
- 50% of teens have a TV in their bedroom
- Average American teen watched/s:
 - Over 200,000 acts of violence
 - 15,000 sexual acts per year
 - 2000 beer/wine commercials per year
- Children don't differentiate between reality and TV and can't distinguish the qualitative difference in information, i.e. they believe what is happening on TV is real and reliable
- Teen programming has more sexual content than adult programming, but less than 10% of the content shows responsible behavior

Theatrical entertainment activates mood circuits and deactivate higher cortical circuits, thus studies show that the more theatrical entertainment the greater problems with concentration and impulse control.

In other words, theatrical entertainment actually changes the brain structure undermining self-control and increasing aggression – regardless of the rating of the programming.

G-rated or R-rated both increased violence and impaired concentration in multiple studies. But educational television did not.

It is not the box, but the content on the box – documentaries, lectures like our seminar DVDs do not cause these negative brain effects why?

Because educational programming requires the activation of the higher cortex to think, process, reason, contemplate, reflect, consider etc. Firing these circuits helps them grow. Whereas, theatrical entertainment fires the mood circuits while not activating the higher cortex faculties of reason etc.

Does it matter what we watch? Absolutely!

TUESDAY

Read middle section – 2Cor 10:3-5 – what does it mean? What does it mean the weapons are spiritual?

- The weapons are in harmony with God's kingdom of love
- What kind of weapons would those be? In other words, what would those weapons do, what impact or effect when wielded would these divine weapons have?
- The weapons would be healing and restorative not weapons that injure or harm!



- Consider an antibiotic is a weapon against disease, but what does it do? It heals the person while destroying the infection. Likewise, Spiritual weapons **ALWAYS** heal the sinner, while destroying the sin!
- What are those weapons?
- Truth, Love, Freedom are the big three!
- Truth destroys lies, but heals the mind of the person who partakes the truth
- Love destroys fear and selfishness, but heals the heart of those who partake of and practice love and heals relationships
- Freedom destroys control, coercion, manipulation and unhealthy attachments healing the lives of those caught in relational bondage and heals individuals and relationships

What are carnal weapons?

- Lies – which break the circle of love and trust inciting fear
- Fear – which undermines love and increases selfishness and self protective thoughts and actions
- Selfishness – which results in actions that incite more fear, greater distrust, damage to self and relationships
- Any activity that inflicts injury, harm, pain, suffering on another
- All of these injure the character, mind, brain, body of the person who practices them

While I was at Avondale the chaplain there, Wayne French gave me a paper on Spiritual Abuse. In it were the following definitions of spiritual abuse:

1. Spiritual abuse is the violation of our trust placed in God by someone who betrays that trust by using God's name to gain entrance into our secret soul, destroying our experience of the goodness of God.
2. Spiritual abuse is the exploitation of our sacrificial love for God as a means of advancing organizational and institutional goals, leaving our spirits under-nourished and our lives over-burdened.
3. Spiritual abuse is the addictive power of legalistic theology that creates guilt in order to dispense grace, leaving us spiritual cripples bound to one another by the invisible cords of co-dependency.
4. Spiritual abuse is the silent cancer of secret gossip and malicious rumour [sic] that causes a feeding frenzy among the sharks submerged in the troubled waters of church conflicts. We are unaware of the damage until we stand up and attempt to walk out, and find we have no legs.

Thoughts?

Are these examples of carnal weapons? How could such destructive weapons enter the church and be utilized under the guise of righteousness to destroy?

Could it have anything to do with how one conceives of God's law and thus God's character? Could it be related to having fear based God concepts that result in need to protect self?



Why is it so important to bring every thought into captivity to Christ?

The thoughts we think determine which neural circuits fire, and it is the circuits we fire that grow stronger while those we leave dormant are actually pruned.

Discuss BDNF, proBDNF and neural plasticity.

Read third paragraph, “Billy Graham is quoted...” thoughts?

Where do we draw the line on who is responsible for what we view?

Should we spend our energy ensuring every woman is covered from head to toe any time she leaves her home so no male is ever tempted to think a lustful thought? Or, should we develop a character that doesn't go down those trails, and if our eyes do fall upon something inappropriate we voluntarily turn away?

What is the balance between our responsibility for what we view and think and what others put out there?

Do parents and society have a responsibility to protect children from advertisers?

What is the state's way to protect others? By coercion and laws.

What is God's way? By converting the heart. What would society be like if populated only by people who loved genuinely for others and always wanted to protect, uplift and promote the welfare of others? Would there be any need to protect children from advertisers in such a society? This is God's plan!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “For the New Testament...” thoughts?

What is the relationship between body and mind?

Consider a computer hardware and software, but in which both can affect the other. In the brain the “software” changes the “hardware”, new neurons grow depending on what the software chooses. But also, if the hardware is damaged the software doesn't work as well.

Studies show that lifestyle significantly affects brain function:

- Those who eat fast food and junk food have 40% higher rate of depression than those who do not
- Recent research documented that children who drink soda 1-4 per day had impairments in concentration and impulse control and had more behavior problems, regardless of soda type. Diet, regular, caffeinated or not.



- Sleep deprivation impairs PFC function undermining concentration and increasing irritability, thus making self-governance more difficult
- Obesity increases inflammation, which damages brain cells. Obese persons at age 70 had 8% less brain matter and the brain appeared 16 years older than normal weight persons at age 70

Read last paragraph, “The Holy Spirit...” thoughts?

The paragraph states we should surrender our lifestyle practices that are not in harmony with God’s will to Him. How do we tell what practices are in harmony with His will?

- Scripture? Which means what? That we should eat kosher meats? As the Bible teaches? Or should we go against the Bible and be vegetarians? (Do you see how one can take a truth and turn it? Does the Bible teach to eat kosher meats? Yes, Does it teach vegetarianism after sin? No, But which is the healthiest diet? A balanced vegetarian diet. Are we really going against the Bible to be vegetarian? Of course not! Why? Because the vegetarian diet is based on the principles of Scripture moving back toward God’s original design, but without a specific dietary plan laid out. Whereas, kosher diet is specifically spelled out in Scripture. So those who like rules, spelled out, with to do lists often read Scripture and fail to grow to its truly highest ideals.)
- So how do we have lifestyle practices in harmony with God’s will? What are they?
 - Vegetarianism?
 - What about sugary foods?
 - What about exercise?
 - What about excessive study?
 - Here is one comment I found in a book called Child Guidance, what do you think:
 - Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication; and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from safe paths and stumble and fall in the darkness. The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. He is not to exhaust and waste his physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences, but is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness. {CG 396.4}
 - Overwork?
- Science?
- Do circumstances or situations ever make a difference?
 - Should we advocate everyone in all parts of the world be vegetarian? Or should that only be for people who have access to a balanced and wholesome vegetarian diet?
 - Should people in third world countries eat fish and chicken?
- How can we tell what is the best?
- What about principles? I.e. the principle of doing what is most healthy with what one has and the knowledge one possesses?

Is this one of the areas that every person should be fully persuaded in their own minds? Why?



Well what if a person does exercise, but is doing it under protest, hates it, and the entire time activates stress circuits? Will that benefit them in the same way as doing an exercise they enjoyed would? No it won't

The paragraph makes a great point that Satan wants to control our minds through our bodies, whereas Jesus wants to control our bodies through our minds.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "The goal of revival..." thoughts?

What is central to having the light of God shining through us? Would it not be to actually come back to the truth about God's character of love?

And what does it mean to live a distinctly different lifestyle?

Does it mean – dress in obviously peculiar ways so that one draws attention to oneself and advertises they are a member of a particular organization, i.e. military uniform, wearing a yamaka, or headdress?

Or perhaps, it means avoiding certain foods, worshipping on a particular day, but didn't people 2000 years ago live very different, stand apart based on their religion and yet kill Jesus?

So is the primary issue in living a distinctly different lifestyle one of external behavior? NO!

The primary, central, element to living a different lifestyle is living a lifestyle that is not self-centered. We live a lifestyle of love, kindness, humility, seeking to be of service, to bless others.

But this idea of living a different lifestyle has been corrupted to allow selfishness to reign in Pharisaism, as we pride in our restrictive diet, "I am going to follow the health message even if it kills me." We pride in our refusal to wear jewelry and makeup, thus making a greater spectacle of ourselves, then if we would use some modest cosmetics.

God is calling for a people who are not self-focused but genuinely living lives that love Him, want to reveal Him as Jesus did in loving others!

Read last paragraph, "The Old Testament..." thoughts? They quote a text from Isaiah 55, what is the context of that text? God's Justice is not like ours! God's justice is freely pardoning, delivering and healing. It is restorative, whereas ours is vengeful. Thus God's ways are not like our own.

We are to live radical, loving, free pardoning, forgiving others, lives that contradict the world's definitions which have crept into the church.



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Many profess...” thoughts?

Does it matter of what kind of God we spend our time thinking about?

Read and discuss questions 2-4